

## Community resources

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## Viewing cable 09CARACAS404, REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO HELP STRENGTHEN

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09CARACAS404**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09CARACAS404</a>	<a href="#">2009-03-27 18:44</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Caracas</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/mundo/wikileaks-venezuela-embajada-eeuu-solicito-dinero-para-ayudar-opositores/159398-3.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0013  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCV #0404/01 0861844  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 271844Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2827  
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000404

SIPDIS

DEPT PASS USAID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO HELP STRENGTHEN  
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

REF: A. CARACAS 322

[1](#)B. CARACAS 312

[1](#)C. CARACAS 257

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JOHN CAULFIELD, REASON 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: As President Chavez concentrates even more power in his presidency, and closes off space for democratic dialogue, Embassy's USAID/OTI programs in support of democracy and civil society are vital to preserving and strengthening remaining democratic institutions and practices in Venezuela. FY 2009 total funding for these programs is currently USD 7 million. Given that the November 2008 elections and February 2009 referendum created a new political map for Venezuela, post requests an additional USD 3 million to increase outreach efforts to newly elected state and municipal government, as well as to continue programs to strengthen civil society and prepare for the next round of elections in 2010. Our programs to date have been successful in increasing political pluralism in Venezuela, and redoubling our effort is necessary to counter the increasing authoritarianism of the Chavez government.  
End Summary.

#### Why We Need More Funding

¶2. (C) The November 2008 state and local elections created a new political map, which provides opportunities to increase USG outreach on the local level. By continuing to work through civil society, in support of local issues, USAID/OTI can work with partners to increase democratic participation and demand for good governance. The USG also has increased opportunities to assist interested state and municipal entities to provide better service and be more accountable to the Venezuelan people.

¶3. (C) The February 2009 referendum in which Venezuelans voted to eliminate term limits has prompted different and equally important concerns. President Chavez has interpreted the results as a green light to concentrate even more power in his presidency at the expense of elected state and local governments (Ref A). USAID/OTI has in the past supported civil society in order to protect democratic space, and this need is becoming even greater in light of recent events. The gains that have been made in working to support local NGOs in their functions as watchdogs must be expanded in order to protect the political and civil rights of Venezuelans.

#### Our Request

¶4. (C) With an additional \$3 million, USAID/OTI would have an FY09 budget of \$10 million. This would allow programming to reach out to increased numbers of local governments, including a concerted effort to work with municipalities across the political spectrum, as well as to allow for continued support to civil society to protect democratic space. Funding would be broken down as follows:

\$5 million - Democracy Delivers: Support for local governments, either directly or through civil society actors, in order to show delivery on promises made to the people during the November 2008 political campaigns. Working together in selected municipalities, with efforts to reach out to key areas and including all political parties, to support transparent and effective local governance through providing training and technical assistance in areas like budgeting, providing services with limited funds, and reaching out to the community to increase participation and local buy-in.

\$4 million - Civil Society Support: Support for local NGOs in order to work as watchdogs on issues key for democratic development. As the Venezuelan government continues to centralize government authority, it is imperative that Venezuelan civil society be empowered to protect the rights of Venezuelan citizens. Support will be given to NGOs in the areas of human rights and promotion of democratic participation, as well as to interested political parties, to develop young leaders and increase outreach to both the Venezuelan youth movement as well as underrepresented women.

\$1 million - Election Support: Nationwide municipal council elections are supposed to be held in August 2009, but the National Assembly is actively considering a measure to postpone these elections until 2010. Elections for the unicameral National Assembly are supposed to take place by late 2010. These significant electoral contests will require continued work to support outreach to voters in order to inform and get out the vote, which may include public service announcements, voter registration campaigns, and vote protection efforts.

Why Increase Funding?

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15. (C) Upon winning the February 2009 re-election referendum, President Chavez announced that he would accelerate his Bolivarian revolution. In the month following that victory, it has become abundantly clear that this means an increasing centralization of power and undermining duly elected political alternatives working at the state and municipal levels. Both these trends run counter to our primary strategic goals of strengthening democracy in Venezuela. Our previous assistance efforts have helped develop a strong and vibrant civil society that promotes political pluralism, consensus-building, and dialogue.

16. (C) We risk losing these efforts as Chavez radicalizes his revolution. Without our continued assistance it is possible that the organizations we helped create, which arguably represent the best hope for a more open democratic system in Venezuela, could be forced to close as local funding options dry up for fear of possible government retaliation. As reftels indicate, the Chavez government is constantly attacking those who call for dialogue and consensus. Our funding will provide those organizations a much-needed lifeline.  
CAULFIELD